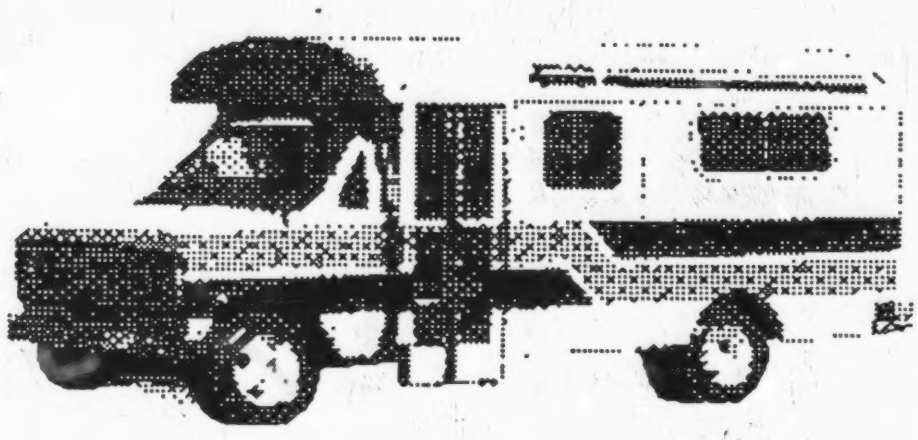
POLICY SUMMARY

FOR

SPECIALIZED TRANSIT SERVICES



Ministry of Transportation
Ontario

Transit Office
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MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION
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PREFACE

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

1. This subsidy program for transportation of physically disabled persons in Ontario was introduced in July 1979, by the Ministry of Transportation and Communications (now known as the Ministry of Transportation). The Program is intended to financially assist those municipalities providing specialized transit service for those individuals who are physically unable to climb or descend steps used on public transit facilities or walk a distance of 175 metres.

MINISTRY INITIATIVES FOR DISABLED PERSONS

2. The Ministry of Transportation has a number of initiatives underway to address the mobility needs of Ontario's disabled population, in addition to the special transit program which is outlined in this policy summary.

   The Ministry, in conjunction with municipalities and their transit systems are actively seeking to increase the accessibility of public transit for the ambulatory disabled, the frail, the blind and the cognitively impaired. This initiative, known as Improved Accessibility to Conventional Transit (IACTS) is currently demonstrating and evaluating various improvements which can satisfy the needs of more than 90 per cent of disabled persons. This will assist in minimizing the demands on special transit and facilitate the integration of disabled persons into the community.

   The Ministry is actively promoting an accessible taxi program to the taxi industry through a $3500 grant per vehicle purchase. Accessible taxis offer non-ambulatory persons a private alternative to public transportation. Where available to-date, the specially adapted vehicles have been enthusiastically supported by both users and taxi operators.

   The Ministry is changing its disabled license plate system to a portable permit system to facilitate greater mobility by disabled persons and to prevent abuse of the associated parking privileges. Municipal parking by-laws will be amended as part of this changeover.

   The Ministry is also developing a range of new initiatives to address other mobility needs of Ontario disabled population, to encourage their integration to society. Details will be provided on these as they are implemented.

Enquiries on the Ministry's overall program of services for the disabled and elderly can be directed to:

Coordinator
Transportation for Disabled and Elderly Persons
3rd Floor, West Tower
1201 Wilson Avenue
Downsview, Ontario
M3M 1J8

416-235-3963
416-235-4986 TDD

CORRESPONDENCE

3. Direct all transit related correspondence and communications to the mailing address noted below:

Ministry of Transportation
Transit Office
3rd Floor, West Tower
1201 Wilson Avenue
Downsview, Ontario
M3M 1J8

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

4. Call the Transit Office at (416) 235-4010 for technical assistance when starting a new service, for background information concerning the program, methods of operation, information on vehicle specifications, statistics, etc.

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

5. Copies of the various acts mentioned in this summary, and other Ontario Government publications are available from:

Ontario Government Bookstore
880 Bay Street
Toronto

To order by mail, write to:

Publications Services Section
5th Floor
880 Bay Street
Toronto, M7A 1N8

Tel Nos. 965-6015 (Within Toronto Area)
1-800-268-7540 (Other communities)
Zenith 67200 (Operator assisted in area code 807)

There is a charge for this service.

TRANSIT OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

6. The Transit Office is responsible for the Ministry's Municipal Transit Program which provides financial, technical and technological assistance to municipalities towards the provision of public transit services to meet the mobility and transportation needs of Ontario residents. The Office:

- develops and evaluates programs and policies.
- administers the financial assistance program.
- pays subsidies to municipalities towards the net cost in the operation of public transit service. Capital funds are also provided to subsidize the purchase and construction of transit capital assets.
- initiates new and innovative demonstration projects.
- provides an advisory service to municipalities to assist them in planning their transit services, designing new or expanded transit maintenance facilities and passenger terminals, and determining new equipment requirements.
- assists municipalities with operational and planning studies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their systems.
- works with municipalities to identify and develop operational, managerial and technical strategies.

ACTIVITIES OF MUNICIPALITY

1. The municipality administers the service and applies to the province for subsidy.

2. One of the requirements for funding is that certain basic, yet important statistics, be maintained. These statistics are used for program monitoring, and are not any more detailed or onerous to maintain than those which would normally be required for the proper management and development of the system.

AUTHORITY FOR SUBSIDY

3. The authority for this subsidy is found in Section 94 of the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act R.S.O. 1980 and amended in 1981.

WHO THE SERVICE IS INTENDED FOR

4. This policy of provincial support for the provision of transportation for physically disabled persons is intended to assist municipalities to provide service to those individuals who are physically unable to climb or descend steps used on public transit facilities or walk a distance of 175 metres. This eligibility must be determined and enforced by the municipality. This could be done through professional verification of a person's inability to board regular transit facilities which can in turn be ruled on by an eligibility committee or a municipal official.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

5. Funding is available for transportation for physically disabled persons to any municipality wishing to provide this type of service. Funding must, however, be **claimed directly by a municipality** for services operated by, or on behalf of the municipality, or under an agreement between the municipality and a person, firm or corporation. Two or more municipalities may join together to provide a service.

HOW IS FUNDING APPLIED FOR

6. The method of applying for provincial assistance and a description and examples of the forms necessary are contained in the Municipal Transit Manual for Special Services.

   The Manual and necessary forms are available to municipalities and can be obtained by contacting the Transit Office, Ministry of Transportation.

WHO SHOULD OPERATE THIS SERVICE

7. Services may be operated by a municipality directly or on their behalf. There are a variety of ways to provide a specialized transportation system for physically disabled persons. Some of the following are usually involved:

   - concerned citizens
   - non-profit organizations
   - contractors specializing in this form of transportation
   - taxi companies
   - service clubs
   - municipal departments
   - transit departments or commissions

   A municipality may employ more than one of the above mentioned means.

   Example:

   The service is managed on a day to day basis by members of a non-profit incorporated board, and the municipality supports the service financially and has municipal representation on the Board.

8. A municipality will find it useful to establish an advisory committee of interested or qualified citizens, including members from various municipal departments such as transportation, social services, planning, etc. to aid in setting guidelines for the operator. Some of the functions of the committee would be to:

   - review existing services in the community
   - determine the best operator of the service
   - determine if any coordination of services is possible
   - set service standards
   - determine operating policies, etc.

WHAT LEVEL OF SERVICE IS APPROPRIATE

9. A municipality may provide whatever level of service it feels is appropriate. The service provided should be tailored to the reasonable needs of the registrants. Service hours operated by conventional transit may be used as a guide for determining the extent of service.

WHAT FARE SHOULD BE CHARGED

10. The published fare rates of the municipal transit system may be used. Normally fares range between $0.80 and $2.00 per one-way trip in municipalities without a conventional transit system.

RECIPROCAL TREATMENT OF REGISTRANTS

11. When participating in the Provincial funding program, a municipality agrees to recognize the eligible status of non-residents duly registered in other participating municipalities.

WHAT COSTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

12. All capital and operating costs properly incurred by a municipality in the provision of service are considered subsidizable. To ensure the availability of Provincial funding in a given year, a municipality must submit its proposed expenditures and have them approved by the Ministry of Transportation.

13. The cost of providing service entirely within the municipality is subsidizable. Two or more municipalities may also join to form a service area in which all trips would be eligible for subsidy.

FINANCIAL DONATIONS

14. Charitable donations received by a municipality from corporations, individuals or non-profit organizations and expended by it for transportation services or capital items may be used by the municipality to offset or augment its share of the cost of the service. No prior ministerial approval is necessary in order to use financial donations in this manner.

    Financial contributions linked to, or conditional upon, specific acquisitions will not be treated as a non-profit exemption. These amounts must be deducted from the expenditure level before the provincial subsidy calculation is applied.

SALE AND DISPOSAL OF ASSETS

15. When a capital asset (e.g. bus or computer) owned by the municipality is sold, the proceeds will be credited to the capital asset account prior to the calculation of subsidy. This regulation will apply whether the asset was subsidized by the Ministry or not. It also applies whether the asset is replaced immediately, later or not at all.

CAPITAL

1. Eligible capital costs properly incurred by municipalities are subsidized at two rates. Computer hardware and software at 75%, everything else is 50%.

OPERATING

2. **'Basic' Component**

   Where the cost of acquiring vehicles has already been subsidized through this program, associated eligible operating cost is subsidized at the rate of 25%. If the cost of acquiring vehicles has not been subsidized under this Program, associated eligible operating costs can be subsidized at the rate of 30%.

3. **'Passenger Based' Component**

   This component of operating subsidy is calculated by multiplying the number of eligible passenger trips (excluding those made by attendants or companions) by $3.15. (1989) The rate is reviewed annually.

4. **Specialized Vehicle Subsidy**

   Costs associated with the operation of specialized vehicles designed specifically for transporting physically disabled persons, such as the Orion II, are subsidized at the additional rate of 1% for 1989.

5. **Minimum Operating Subsidy**

   A guaranteed minimum operating subsidy of 50% of actual net operating cost will apply under this policy.

6. **Additional Subsidy for Cross Boundary Trips**

   An additional subsidy of $3.15 will be provided for each eligible cross boundary trip, which is defined as a trip crossing a boundary of a Regional Municipality.

7. **Subsidy Ceiling**

   Notwithstanding any of the foregoing, the total operating subsidy payable to a municipality shall not exceed either:

   - 75% of the actual net operating cost for this service, or
   - 50% of the total (gross) cost of all transit services offered by the municipality.